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ABSTRACT

The educational achievements of the young depend on both family and school but are much more dependent on the former than the latter. Educational policy has established an extensive set of legal and contractual obligations for schools. In contrast, the contractual obligation for families is to meet compulsory education requirements. The establishment of performance expectations or contracts between families and society may be an effective way to enhance educational outcomes. This paper investigates the need for, feasibility of, and possible content of such performance expectations by suggesting the construction of metaphorical contracts for families to provide for the education of their children. It begins by documenting the overwhelming ties between socioeconomic status (SES) and student educational results. It then looks at the research literature on what families do that improves educational results for their children (what SES reflects). Next, it considers what a comprehensive family contract that embodied these behaviors would look like. Finally, it adds greater specificity to such a family contract by asking what families can do on their own if properly informed, including low-income families; what families can do with training and support; and what gaps in the contract must be filled by other service providers. (Contains 58 footnotes.) (SM)

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Teachers College, Columbia University

FAMILIES AS CONTRACTUAL PARTNERS IN EDUCATION*

March 2002

H. M. Levin and C. R. Belfield
National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education
Teachers College, Columbia University
Box 181, W120th Street, New York NY10027
www.ncspe.org

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H. Levin
NCSPE, Teachers College, Columbia Univ

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Abstract The educational achievements of the young depend both on family and school, but are much more dependent on the former than the latter. Educational policy has established an extensive set of legal and contractual obligations for schools. In contrast, the only contractual obligation for families is to meet compulsory education requirements. The establishment of "performance expectations" or "contracts" between families and society may be an effective way to enhance educational outcomes, if family capacity is augmented to succeed in meeting these provisions. This paper investigates the need for, feasibility of, and possible content of such "performance expectations" by suggesting the construction of metaphorical contracts for families to provide for the education of their children. We begin by documenting the overwhelming ties between socio-economic status (SES) and student educational results. We then look at the research literature on what families do that improves educational results for their children – that is, what is it that SES reflects? Next, we consider what a comprehensive family contract that embodied these behaviors would look like. Finally, we add greater specificity to such a family contract by asking: (a) What can families do on their own if properly informed, even low-income families? (b) What can families do with training, and support? (c) What gaps in the contract must be filled by other service providers? Answers to these questions are important for education reforms that – within the context of privatization – seek to capitalize on parental efforts and energies.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, privatization of elementary and secondary education has become an increasingly common topic. Usually this is meant to refer to enrollment in private or independent schools as contrasted with public schools or to mechanisms that would subsidize private education such as educational vouchers and tuition tax credits.[1] However, at its core, privatization in education begins with family effort, in essence the purest form of privatization. Studies of educational achievement or educational attainments find consistently that differences in family circumstances have a very large influence on educational outcomes, typically greater than the impacts of differences among schools. For this reason, education is already heavily 'privatized'.

More than 90 percent of the waking hours of a child from birth to the age of 18 is spent outside of school in an environment that is heavily conditioned, both directly and indirectly, by families.[2] Yet, the thrust of formal educational policy is devoted overwhelmingly to school improvement, ostensibly to raise student achievement and improve educational equity. Of course, many schools also attempt to incorporate a variety of forms of parental involvement, but such involvement is limited largely to the margins of the educational process rather than being viewed as a dominant determinant of that process.[3] The most elemental form of educational privatization is found in the high level of control that families have over the activities that directly and indirectly determine educational outcomes. Although families may also expand their control over education through school choice mechanisms, there is little evidence at this time of a powerful effect on educational outcomes from such expansion.[4]

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[1] H. M. Levin, "The Public-Private Nexus in Education," In P. V. Rosenau, ed., Public-Private Policy Partnerships (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 129-42. Also, H. M. Levin, ed., Privatizing Education (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001). C. R. Belfield, "Tuition Tax Credits: What Do We Know So Far? Occasional Paper # 33, National Center for the Study of Privatization, Teachers College, Columbia University. www.ncspe.org.

[2] L. Sosniak, "The 9% challenge: education in school and society," Teachers College Record, www.tcrecord.org, ID10756.

[3] The most comprehensive source is J. L. Epstein, School, Family, & Community Partnerships (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 2001). Also see C. Jordan, E. Orozco, & A. Averett, Emerging Issues in School, Family, & Community Connections, Annual Synthesis 2001, National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002).

[4] C. R. Belfield & H. M. Levin, "The Effects of Competition on Educational Outcomes: A Review of the US Evidence" NCSPE Occasional Paper #35, National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.

In this paper we suggest a way of viewing families as contractual partners in education, that is, having contractual obligations in behalf of their children. To a large degree this notion of a "contract" is metaphorical since a democratic society permits families to rear their children in diverse ways with wide latitude among practices. But, one can still view the family as an educator and raise the question of what type of contractual obligations would maximize the educational success of its offspring, including family choice of and participation in the schooling of its children.[5] We do not assume that all families will have the full capacity to satisfy the contract, so attention must be devoted to what types of institutions would be required to help families meet any contractual obligations. As we will note, this is not the first attempt to focus on the family to improve educational achievement of their offspring. Our attempt is to do more than to propose specific programs. It is to identify in a comprehensive manner the knowledge-base that links family behaviors to educational outcomes and to codify that into a metaphorical contract that might be implemented by families in conjunction with a variety of social institutions.

In what follows we have divided the paper into a number of sections. In the next section we will document the fact that the production of educated citizens is dependent upon both family and school influences. We will suggest that in spite of this knowledge, the public focus has been much heavier on making schools more effective than on making families more effective. In the following section we will provide a brief review of "effective" family behaviors that contribute to educational attainment, suggesting that equal effort must be given to the latter as the former. We will suggest that just as there are contractual obligations for schools, we can establish a metaphorical contract of obligations for families, one that is based on evidence about effective educational practices of parenting. Finally, we will suggest a conceptual framework for consideration of how to provide families with the capacity to meet their metaphorical contractual obligations.

FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS

Prior to the 1960's, it was assumed that differences in school resources and other characteristics were the dominant causes of differences in such educational outcomes as achievement scores and years of

[5] One of the earliest efforts in this direction is H. Leichter, Families as Educators (New York: Teachers College Press,

schooling attained. It should be noted that in those years, fiscal support of schools was extraordinarily disparate among states, school districts, and schools.[6]

The Coleman Report, a study requested by Congress under the 1964 Civil Rights Act and published in 1966, represented a massive effort to determine the impacts of both families and schools on educational achievement.[7] It concluded that differences in family background characteristics were overwhelmingly more important than school characteristics in explaining differences in student achievement. Although the Coleman study was criticized, in part for using a statistical technique that overstated the impact of families on achievement,[8] its overall finding has been replicated in virtually all of the studies done over ensuing decades.

If there is any controversy, it is only over the methods for measuring the relative home and school influences. For example, at one extreme Hoxby evaluated the statistical determinants of achievement among a sample of more than 16,000 students who were in twelfth grade in 1992. Hoxby found that family variables accounted for more than 93 percent of the variance in mathematics scores with less than 3 percent being explained by school input variables and the remaining 4 percent associated with neighborhood variables.[9] Depending upon which subject is tested, she found that family variables accounted for 34 to 105 times as much variation as the school input variables.[10] She also did a parallel analysis for 33-year-olds in attempting to explain their educational attainments in terms of years of schooling and found a similar result, an overwhelming influence of family background.[11]

One criticism of her method is that she used measures of family characteristics for each individual student, but only cruder school averages for the school inputs. Therefore, the measures of school inputs are insensitive to the variance in student experiences reflected by differences among specific teachers and among classroom groups to which individual students were exposed. In a very recent study, using a method that

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1975).

[6] For the classic critique of inequalities in educational finance, see Coons, J. E., Sugarman, S. D., & Clune, W.H. Private Wealth and Public Education (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

[7] J. S. Coleman et al., Equality of Educational Opportunity, U.S. Department of Education (Washington, D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966).

[8] S. Bowles & H. M. Levin, "The Determinants of Scholastic Achievement," The Journal of Human Resources, III(1), (Winter 1968), pp. 3-24.

[9] C. Hoxby, "If Families Matter Most, Where Do Schools Come In?" In T. Moe, ed., A Primer on America's Schools (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2001), pp. 96-97.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

accounts for some of these within-school differences. Wenglinsky found that teaching variables might have a weight equivalent to socioeconomic (SES) variables.[12]

Although some argue that the family is the key to educational improvement[13] and others argue that it is the school,[14] the conflict between the two positions lacks merit. Both families and schools are important in educational development. From an economist's perspective, they are joint inputs into the production function for education,[15] and they are partially interdependent rather than separable in effects. That is, school inputs and family inputs may interact in such ways that students from some backgrounds may benefit more from specific resources and school policies than do other students. For example, reductions in class size seem to have a larger impact on minority students and those from lower SES backgrounds than Anglo students or those from middle class backgrounds.[16] This pattern of differential effects by race and social class has also been found in other studies.[17] Or consider that when students enter schools with stronger preparation and higher expectations, teachers are able to provide more demanding challenges than when students are less prepared.

Preoccupation with Schools

While the importance of families in determining educational outcomes is highly recognized in the literature, it is less emphasized in educational policy. The main focus of educational policy has been on institutional reforms within schools in teaching practices and curriculum or changes in the organization of the

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[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

[12] H. Wenglinsky, "How Schools Matter: The Link Between Teacher Classroom Practices and Student Academic Performance," Education Policy Analysis Archives, **10**(12) (2002) Retrieved February 14, 2002 from http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n12/.

[13] For example, Hoxby, *op. cit.*; L. D. Steinberg, Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

[14] See the effective school literature, for example: R. Edmonds, "Effective Schools for the Urban Poor," Educational Leadership, **37**(1), pp. 15-24; P. Mortimore, "The Vital Hours: Reflecting on Research on Schools and their Effects," In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan, & D. Hopkins, eds. . International Handbook of Educational Change, Part One (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998).

[15] An excellent study that tries to explain improvements in educational achievement of the population over time by both demographic and educational changes is D. W. Grissmer, S. N. Kirby, M. Berends, Student Achievement and the American Family (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 1994).

[16] See A. B. Krueger, "Experimental Estimates of Education Production," Quarterly Journal of Economics, "Empirical Estimates of Education Production Functions," **CXIV**, pp. 497-532; and A. Molnar, P. Smith, J. Zahorik, A. Palmer, A. Halbach, & K. Ehrle, "Evaluating the SAGE Program: A Pilot Program in Targeted Pupil-Teacher Reduction in Wisconsin," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, **21**(2) (Summer 1999), pp. 170-171.

educational system, especially encouraging parental choice through more public and private schooling options.[18] Much of this reform has been toward privatization and more choice. So, public choice examples include magnet schools, open enrollment among schools within districts and states, and charter schools.[19] Charter schools are relatively autonomous public schools that are exempted from most rules and regulations in exchange for their pursuing an approved mission or charter. Many are operated under contract by private and for-profit educational management organizations (EMOs), although some are run by nascent community groups that include local parents. In 2002 there were more than 2,400 charter schools with about 580,000 students in 34 states and the District of Columbia, a rapid expansion considering that the first charter schools were only established in 1992.[20]

Market approaches also include the provision of publicly-funded, educational vouchers which can be applied to the cost of private education and tuition-tax credits which represent tax subsidies to families and businesses for paying tuition at private schools. However, the use of educational vouchers is still rare and small-scale. In 2002 educational voucher plans had been operating in Milwaukee for eleven years and in Cleveland for about seven years: annual enrollments were less than 20,000 students.[21] Florida has a voucher statute on its books for students in public schools that have been declared to be "failing" two years in a row. Except for a single year when students in two schools were eligible for vouchers, no schools have met the failing criteria since. Education vouchers have also been challenged in the courts: the Cleveland program is presently under scrutiny by the U.S. Supreme Court, with plaintiffs arguing successfully in the lower courts

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[17] D. A. Grissmer, J. K. Flanagan, & S. Williamson, Improving Student Achievement: What State NAEP Scores Tell Us, (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 2000); and H. M. Levin, "A Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of Teacher Selection," The Journal of Human Resources, **V**(1) (Winter 1970), pp. 24-33.

[18] A large range of school reforms is found in J. H. Block, S. T. Everson, & T. R. Guskey, School Improvement Programs (New York: Scholastic, 1995). Also see L. Schauble & R. Glaser, eds., Innovations in Learning (Mahwah, NJ: LEA Publishers, 1996).

[19] The best overall source on traditional public choice options is W. H. Clune & J. F. Witte, eds., Choice and Control in American Education, 2 Vol. (New York: The Falmer Press, 1990). The more recent charter school movement is discussed in B. Fuller, ed. Inside Charter Schools (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) and in the picture provided by C. Finn, B. Manno, & G. Vanourek, Charter Schools in Action (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Its origins are found in Nathan, J. Charter Schools: Creating Hope and Opportunity for American Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996).

[20] Taken from www.edreform.com/ as posted on January 7, 2002. The Center for Education Reform in Washington D.C. collects comprehensive information on charter schools.

[21] For a summary of the Cleveland and Milwaukee voucher programs, see U.S. Congress, General Accounting Office, School Vouchers: Publicly Funded Programs in Cleveland and Milwaukee, GAO-01-914 (August 2002). The Milwaukee

that the plan violates the First Amendment by virtue of almost all the vouchers being used in religious schools.[22] Nevertheless, the emphasis of voucher programs is on parental choice of schooling.

Almost all of these efforts at policy reform recognize that families are important in determining educational results of offspring. Indeed, advocates argue that school choice will energize parents to improve family practices in the education of their students, while also creating incentives for schools to improve their performance in order to maintain and attract clientele.[23] School reform projects also make at least some attempt to expand parental involvement in the education of students, particularly in the school but also at home. However, most of the focus of in-school reforms is on changes in pedagogy, curriculum and governance. More convincingly, the foremost expert on the educational role of families has concluded: "No topic about school improvement has created more rhetoric than 'parent involvement' "[24], rhetoric that exceeds substantially the magnitude of effective interventions. The substance of parental involvement has been marginal relative to the possibilities represented by families for improving the education of their children. School policy for improving educational outcomes has been far more obsessed with pressuring schools to change than inducing change in families.

A recent strand of school policy reform is the preoccupation with raising standards and closing the gaps among social groups (motivated by the concern about mediocre performance on achievement tests and unequal outcomes by race and SES). The "standards movement", which is found in almost all of the states, emphasizes improving achievement test results as a condition of graduation and promotion as well as reducing test score inequalities between minority and Anglo students.[25] The "standards movement" that is prevalent in the U.S. is obsessed with the school as the instrument of change by setting curriculum content standards and tests that measure progress on those standards. Often the rationale given is that of raising economic productivity and reducing economic inequality in an internationally competitive economy. But, a

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voucher program is described and analyzed in detail in J. F. Witte. The Market Approach to Education (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[22] No. 00-1751 Susan Tave Zelman, Superintendent of Public Instruction of Ohio, et al., Petitioners v. Doris Simmons-Harris, et al. Docketed: Lower Ct: United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
May 23, 2001 (00-3055/3060/3063).

[23] For example, see Hoxby, op. cit.

[24] J. L. Epstein, op cit., p. 3.

school-based approach without more focus on families may have disappointing results for the reason that test score gains from educational reforms that are limited to schools have been modest and such gains show only a limited relation to productivity or earnings.[26] For example, dramatic reductions in class size from about 25 to 15 students per class in the famous Tennessee Class Size experiment resulted in an increase in student achievement of about .25 standard deviations.[27] Minority students improved by about .30 standard deviations and white students by about .20 standard deviations.[28] Only about one-tenth of the black-white achievement gap was reduced by this very costly reform.[29] Among reforms that have been shown to succeed in improving educational achievement, the impacts are relatively small, and little of the achievement gap has been closed.[30]

Beyond an emphasis on standards, market advocates have pushed for greater competition among schools for students in order to provide an incentive to raise school effectiveness. But, summaries of studies measuring the effects of school competition have found that impacts on achievement are extremely modest, in the range of .1 of a standard deviation.[31] To give some idea of how small these effects are when translated into a practical application, this amounts to a 10 point increase on the SAT verbal or mathematical test for

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[25] National Research Council, Committee on Appropriate Test Use, High Stakes: Testing for Tracking, Promotion, and Grade Retention, J. P. Heubert & R. M. Hauser, eds. (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1998).
[26] H. M. Levin, "High Stakes Testing and Economic Productivity," In G. Orfield & M. L. Kornhaber, Raising Standards or Raising Barriers? (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2001), pp. 39-50.
[27] J. D. Finn & C. M. Achilles, "Tennessee's Class Size Study: Findings, Implications, Misconceptions," Economic Evaluation and Policy Analysis, **21**(2) (Summer 1999), pp. 97-109.
[28] See A. Krueger, op. cit., fn 10.
[29] The black-white achievement gap is about 1 standard deviation. See L. V. Hedges & A. Nowell, "How and Why the Gap has Changed," In C. Jencks & M. Phillips, eds., The Black-White Test Score Gap (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), p. 154.
[30] Even these "successful results" overstate the case because they do not account for highly mobile students. That is, they evaluate achievement gains for students who have been in the school reform continuously over one year or more. The most disadvantaged students are highly mobile, moving frequently among schools. See H. M. Levin, "Issues in Designing Cost-Effectiveness Comparisons of Whole-School Reforms," In H. M. Levin & P. McEwan, eds., Cost-Effectiveness and Educational Policy, 2002 Yearbook of the American Educational Finance Association (Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, 2002).
[31] C. R. Belfield & H. M. Levin, "The Effects of Competition on Educational Outcomes: A Review of the US Evidence" NCSPE Occasional Paper #35, National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.

college admission, a test which has a mean of about 500 and a range from 200 to 800.[32] An improvement of .1 of a standard deviation is likely to be associated with less than a one percent increase in earnings.[33]

In summary, strategies to improve education rely primarily on schools, with some involvement from families. However, such limited tendrils reaching to families are likely to have only marginal effects on educational outcomes because so much educational success is based upon family actions, circumstances and behaviors that are not extensions of schooling or that even take place in the preschool period. Both families and schools are central to obtaining strong educational results, and the imbalance of educational policy in the direction of schools is detrimental to improving the quality and distribution of educational outcomes.

SEEKING BALANCE BETWEEN FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

One measure of the present imbalance created by policy emphasis on schools rather than families is to compare the formal strictures placed on schools with those placed on families in behalf of producing educational results. The schools that our children attend are subject to a sheaf of laws, rules, regulations, directives, guidelines, and policies that are far too extensive for enumeration. Although providing less than 10 percent of the funding for elementary and secondary schools, the federal government sets numerous and complicated rules and procedures that affect the operations of all schools. Federal laws and regulatory provisions have especially proliferated for such functions as education for handicapped students, gender equity, economically disadvantaged students, bilingual students, racial stratification, and vocational education. The recent "No Child Left Behind Act" which became law in January 2002 constitutes over 1,000 pages in itself, just a single law. And, there will likely be thousands of pages of additional regulations set out by the U.S. Department of Education for implementing the Law.

Federal courts have also been active in setting standards for the operation of schools under the federal constitution. State laws are even more multitudinous than the federal ones and administered by

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[32] The most competitive colleges and universities require SAT scores in the 700 range; the second tier of competitive institutions require scores in the 600 range. For state institutions and less-selective private colleges it is the 500 range. An improvement of 10 points is unlikely to increase a student's eligibility for a more selective institution. For a review of SAT scores of enrollees, see www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/corank.htm.

[33] Calculations based upon findings of R. J. Murnane, J. B. Willett, Y. Duhaldeborde, & J. H. Tyler, "How Important are the Cognitive Skills of Teenagers in Predicting Subsequent Earnings." Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, **19**(4) (Fall 2000), pp. 555-557. Their estimate would be about 1.5 percent, but this is overstated by their technique for reasons

activist state departments of education setting their own regulations and policies and monitoring school districts. Federal and state laws are further augmented by the actions of local school boards. And, state courts have gotten deeply involved in interpreting state laws and constitutions.

It is probably not even possible to fully document all of the laws, regulations, and policies that frame the operations of schools. One can view these as representing an overlapping set of contracts which might be viewed as "binding agreements among the parties." [34] Of course, these contracts are so complex that only a small portion of them are effectively operable at any one time since the overwhelming numbers and complexities of the provisions make them impossible to fully monitor. School personnel are familiar with those provisions that are presently salient or that are monitored, but others are ignored or are found to cover such limited circumstances that they are only identified rarely and when specific circumstances arise. Monitoring of contracts is costly, so it is not surprising that only a small portion of the provisions are monitored. But, part of this leviathan of requirements can be thought of as set of formal contracts that are enforceable by governments that have sanctions. Government agencies can withhold funds and official recognition of schools, can close and reshape institutions, or can change personnel. In addition, there are less formal agreements that might be more temporal in nature, agreements with students and their families that constitute an informal contract on school activities or expectations.[35] Such informal contracts are subject to change with changes in clientele and can be enforced by sanctions available to families through political channels or exit.[36]

The enforceable contracts that schools are party to have two features. First, public schools, other than those embedded in educational voucher arrangements or public choice, are largely answerable to federal,

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elaborated on in H. M. Levin, "High Stakes Testing and Economic Productivity," In G. Orfield & M. L. Kornhaber, Raising Standards or Raising Barriers? (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2001), pp. 43-44.

[34] The concept of contracts is a well-established area of law. We are using the concept of contract in a less formal way to encompass the agreed upon functions that are required of agencies in fulfillment of their obligations to another entity.

[35] See J. Bishop, "Incentives to study and the organization of secondary instruction," In W. E. Becker and W. J. Baumol, eds., Assessing Educational Practices (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996). Also see A. G. Powell, E. Farrar & D. K. Cohen, The Shopping Mall High School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985).

[36] See A. Hirschman, Exit, Voice, and Loyalty (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970). Hoxby op. cit., pp. 104-110 estimates that almost 70 percent of parents can make intentional choices of schools. Also see J. R. Henig and S. D. Sugarman, "The Nature and Extent of School Choice," In S. D. Sugarman and F. D. Kemerer, eds., School Choice and Social Controversy (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1999), pp. 13-35. Henig and Sugarman estimate the figure at about 60 percent.

state, and local authorities rather than to parents or students. Moreover, there is little or no bargaining over contractual provisions because the schools are agencies of state government and are expected to fulfill those responsibilities mandated by federal and state authorities. The contracts are imposed, not negotiated. Second, the contracts are procedural rather than outcome-based. That is, the schools are required to follow procedures set out by Congress, courts, legislatures, and administrative branches rather than to produce specific educational outcomes. Only recently have there been sanctions for schools that are "failing" to produce specific educational results, sanctions either in terms of reconstitution of schools by external authorities or by allowing students in failing schools to seek other alternatives such as under the Florida voucher plan.

But, if families have a powerful influence on the educational results for their children both separately and in concert with schools, one might expect to find formal obligations set out for them as well. In fact, the formal requirement for family participation in education as embodied in law is so trivial that it is in stark contrast to the overwhelming accretion of formal demands and procedures set on schools. Basically, there is a single requirement: a child must meet compulsory attendance requirements, that is he or she must be in attendance at a recognized school during regular school hours or must meet other participation requirements as set out for home schooling. Of course, families are not the property of the state, whereas schools are agencies of the state. But, if better educational results, and particularly, more nearly equal outcomes in education are to be achieved, it is obvious that schools cannot do it alone.[37] Rather, changes in family behavior will be necessary as well, particularly among those families at the bottom of the SES ladder whose children are most challenged in terms of educational outcomes.

ACCOUNTABILITY ACROSS PUBLIC SERVICES

[37] Other writers have sought to re-assess the balance between schools and families: Roback Morse (2002) argues that many existing government programs 'crowd out' family behaviors, rather than supplement them. So, Universal Pre-school Programs or School Breakfast Programs are held to weaken or undermine relationships within the family, rather than aid them. See J. Roback Morse "Competing Visions of the Child, the Family, and the School," In E. P. Lazear, ed., Education in the Twenty-first Century (California: Hoover Institute Press, 2002).

The policy trends outlined above for education are mirrored in other public services, where similar questions are being raised regarding optimal forms of governance.[38] Specifically, the development of site-based management, devolved decision-making and organizational change (e.g. into charter schools and contract schools) has its counterpart in reforms to the welfare system. In that system, Diller describes how 'ground-level agency personnel' have been given substantially more discretion since 1996, along with 'performance-based evaluation systems' and redefined 'institutional culture' to mitigate any loss of accountability at higher levels of government. Thus, the education and welfare systems are tending toward 'hollowing out', with any side effects being addressed through stricter (or more directly specified) accountability mechanisms. Whereas in education parents can serve as one 'check' to the loss of higher level accountability, Diller cautions against the absence of such a check by the analogous party in the welfare system – recipients of benefits. Diller's concern for welfare recipients who face external constraints can be compared to the concern noted here for parents with under-developed parenting skills. With recent reforms, these groups are inevitably facing greater self-responsibility.

The parallel between welfare and education sectors can be extended. Education systems should be not only efficient but also equitable. Similarly, Diller situates welfare reform in terms of a trade-off: "Regardless of whether one agree with the goals and philosophy of welfare reform, the lack of accountability and potential for unfairness in the new administrative regime are causes for concern. One can favor the new emphasis on work in many TANF programs and still value fair process and public participation in administrative decision-making" (1128). Interestingly, the solution in education of parental choice – where it has been successful – has largely been supported as a way of making the system more fair, not less fair (e.g. the parental choice programs targeted at low-income families). The specter perpetually on the horizon is however of parental choice programs that are expanded to upper income families with potentially greater inequities.[39]

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[38] M. Diller. 2000. "The revolution in welfare administration: rules, discretion, and entrepreneurial government." New York University Law Review, 75: 5 (November) 1121-1220.

[39] See the discussion of the potential effects of choice on equity in H. M. Levin. "Educational Vouchers: Effectiveness, Choice, and Costs." Journal of Policy Analysis & Management, **17**(3), pp. 379-382.

Indirectly, we also recognize the tension that Diller notes, a tension arising from a system with "agency personnel as motivators, guides, and overseers of recipients, constantly promoting the message of self-sufficiency" (1129). In education, we could stylize school professionals as "motivators, guides, and overseers" of what learning takes place in the home. Such stylization emerges because of the facts regarding the overwhelming importance of home activities to the educational outcomes of children. It is these unavoidable facts that motivate our metaphorical contract. So, in part we agree with Diller that "Privatization becomes an attractive alternative when ends are viewed as more important than means and where the ends sought can be specified in advance and measured" (1182). Nevertheless, our discussion situates privatization within the context not of pre-specified or of measured outcomes, but instead within the context of what ultimately determines these outcomes: parental behaviors.

A more general discussion of a 'private role in public governance' has been offered recently by Freeman.[40] Here too, we can see parallels with our arguments. So, Freeman begins by asserting that private participation in governance is neither "marginal nor restricted to the implementation of rules and regulations" and that "the relationship between public and private actors in administrative law cannot properly be understood in zero-sum terms, as if augmenting one necessarily depletes the other" (547). This assertion can be rendered directly in terms of our argument: parental influence over educational outcomes is not marginal, and - for higher SES families certainly – is not restricted to following rules. Indeed, we characterize the relationship between parents and schools as strongly interdependent. So, as "public and private actors negotiate over policy making, implementation, and enforcement" (548), Freeman rejects the notion of a hierarchy of governance and control. This rejection fits with our skepticism regarding solutions that 'bolt on' parental engagement to existing school practices (as recent policy initiatives have tended to do) and it chimes with our proposal for stronger 'contracts' – or at least stronger dialogue – between parents and schools.

The richer notion of accountability that Freeman articulates also fits with our claims for future betterment of public and private education. Freeman writes, "accountability is more plural and contextual that traditional administrative law theory allows. In light of public/private interdependence, I propose that

we think in terms of 'aggregate' accountability: a mix of formal and informal mechanisms... Taken together, these mechanisms can allay our concerns about the particular risks posed by the arrangements of public and private actors, while capitalizing on their capacities" (549). For education services, the analogous concern might be to set the risks to the welfare of the children against the benefits from effective parenting. Freeman's suggestions for informal mechanisms could form part of the 'metaphorical contract' that we develop here. The greater need for dialogue – rather than efficiency mandates or legal challenges – extends across public services. Freeman refers to the traditional focus of administrative law as "heavily court centered" (556), with a "quest for legitimacy... understood as the pursuit of public acceptance of administrative authority" (557). In other words, the conventional solutions to governance problems appear to be government agencies still preserving their autonomy but simply being better honed to their purpose. The equivalent solutions in education reform are the search for the efficient school, and the elimination of wasteful bureaucratic agencies.[41] Neither solution has yet yielded much fruit.

Instead, public agencies and private individuals are interdependent in the production of education outcomes for children, with private individuals performing "...key functions that are not traditionally considered the responsibility of the state and that are not easily reduced to contractual obligations... the delivery of a service involves discretionary decisions that are difficult either to prevent through delineated delegation or to police with formal oversight mechanisms" (597). In the case of parenting, we suggest, these discretionary decisions are intimately bound up in the family's lifestyle.

Freeman also offers an explanation for the public/private demarcation that may be pertinent for education provision. Simply, even where governance structures include private actors, they do so warily, fearing regulatory capture by these private actors. A similar aversion may exist in schooling, where teachers cultivate their professional status (and where parents are reluctant to negotiate with professionals regarding the education of their children). We further concur with Freeman that new contractual relationships (metaphorical or otherwise) need not lead to a diminution in the engagement of the state (568). Indeed, it

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[40] J. Freeman. "The private role in public governance". New York University Law Review, **75**, 3, 543-675. In her discussion of public services and benefits Freeman does not, it should be noted, refer to education provision.

may be the private actors themselves who resist greater dialogue with government, fearing greater regulatory oversight (or skeptical of government's expertise, and or embarrassment about their parenting skills). Yet, the imperative – in education as in many other government activities – is for "structuring and capitalizing upon desirable private contributions to governance" (575).[42]

Finally, we perceive the same tensions between public and private as Freeman does. On the one hand, much is made of the 'hallowed' autonomy of the private family in their children's upbringing without governmental intervention. On the other hand, the importance of the family in the education process is clearly acknowledged in research evidence. We concur with Freeman's proposal for further scrutiny of policies that draw on the unavoidable interdependence of family and government (638). At issue is how to frame policy to exploit this interdependence, i.e. in the terms used here, how to develop the metaphorical family contract.

DEVELOPING A METAPHORICAL FAMILY CONTRACT

Presumably there is a knowledge base on what schools need to do to educate children effectively, and this is translated into financial support, resources, and procedures, much of it embodied in laws, rules, and regulations. This knowledge base is always expanding on the basis of experience and research, although it is hardly unequivocal. Debates over the choice of practices and over how they should be implemented are common in education, in part because of differences in values on what is good educational policy and practice. Chubb and Moe suggest that schools based upon democratic decisions must necessarily adopt a hodge-podge of goals and practices that are largely unworkable because they must necessarily be a compromise among many different and conflicting views.[43] But, in fact, decisions are made and practices are adopted that are viewed as effective strategies for achieving given goals.

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[41] E. A. Hanushek, "Conclusions and controversies about the effectiveness of schools," Federal Reserve Bank of New York Economic Policy Review, **4**, 1-22.

[42] In addition, Freeman recognizes the tension that private individuals may face in contracting with the government; her suggestion is to allow for the possibility of "independent third parties to set standards, monitor compliance, and supplement enforcement", along with "professional norms", "internalized rules", and "informal sanctions" (666). These suggestions go beyond our argument here: at this stage, we are seeking to identify what families can achieve. Nevertheless, such suggestions may be appropriate for education provision

[43] J. Chubb & T. Moe, Politics, Markets, and America's Schools (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1970). They advocate a market approach where scholarships or vouchers are given to families to use at any school in a marketplace of choices that meet some minimal government requirements. The initial voucher plan was set out by M.

Paradoxically, the knowledge-base on what family practices have educational consequences is less equivocal than the knowledge-base for schools, but it has been less employed to impact on educational policy. So here we provide an overview of what makes families effective in terms of the education of their students. Although such indicators of SES as parental education, income, occupation, race, language, and family structure (number of parents and siblings) have been used to explain achievement, these are only markers or indicators of social class, not the family practices that account for such differences. In this case we are asking the question: if a family contract was developed that set out the responsibilities of families to maximize their contribution to the education of their students, what would such a contract contain?

We call this a metaphorical contract because we do not have ready mechanisms to enforce such a contract, and much of the contract may require resources that go beyond the capacity of some families, particularly low SES families, to fulfill such responsibilities. However, it is useful to translate the indicators of family SES which account for such substantial portions statistically of educational success into actual behaviors which are affected by family SES. If high SES families are following successful educational practices in the home and in relation to the school, it is important to know what those practices are. Conceptually, these activities can be placed into a metaphorical contract of good practices for all families, and we can seek ways of helping families meet the conditions of the contract. Enforcement and monitoring are problematic, but the likelihood of success for their children might be an important motivation for families.

It should be noted that this is a distinctively different approach than one finds in the literature on school-induced, parent participation or more out-of-school experiences. This school-based literature is important in improving the educational success of children at the margin by trying to get low SES families more involved in the schooling of their students and providing additional opportunities with school-based special programs.[14] These programs are useful, and reflect a genuine effort to improve educational outcomes. But, such approaches tend to be scatter-shot rather than systematic. They are not embedded in a more

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Friedman, "The Role of Government in Education," Capitalism and Freedom (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 85-98.

[14] The most important source of such information from a school-based perspective is J. L. Epstein, op. cit. A recent work in favor of considerable out-of-school investments to assist families educationally is R. Rothstein, "Finance Fungibility: Investigating Relative Impacts of Investments in Schools and Non-School Educational Institutions to

comprehensive picture of what is needed. Moreover, such approaches often require additional funding, rather than emphasizing the re-allocation of activities toward a specific goal. In contrast, a metaphorical contract would attempt to encapsulate comprehensively the various practices that parents would need to pursue to assure a high chance of educational success for their students. As we will suggest in the final section, an overall solution to incorporating families more fully into the education of their children will require some social investments, but that is not necessarily the case for executing every aspect of the contract.

What follows is not an exhaustive catalog of parental behaviors that are linked to educational success, but a representative set that might be used to construct an initial metaphorical contract. Normally, any attempt to review the impacts of families on the educational achievement of their children is limited to measures of SES.[45] In contrast, in refining our question, we are asking: what do SES measures represent in terms of actual family practices that positively affect student achievement?

HIGH SES FAMILIES AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Strong ties between SES and student educational outcomes have been affirmed in numerous studies: SES appears as an important predictor of children's cognitive development, school readiness, school achievement and school completion, as well as other measures of child and adolescent well-being.[46] Three specific pathways have been identified, through which the influence of SES is clearest. These pathways are summarized in Tables 1-3, where the impact of being in a low SES family is described.

[Tables 1-3 here]

First, the home environment of higher SES families is more conducive to educational advancement (Table 1). The strongest effects are through the parent-child interactions, such as the creation of 'school-like' homes, stronger language and literacy relations, and less conflict within the home. In addition, higher SES families have better health and nutrition and follow a more structured daily routine at home. In terms of the

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Improve Student Achievement," A Volume Exploring the Role of Investments in Schools and Other Supports and Services for Families and Communities (Washington, D.C.: Center on Education Policy), pp. 5-38; Also see Hoxby, fn3.

[45] For example, Grissmer et al., fn 12, pp. 39-48 uses family structure, family size, education of parents, age of mother at child's birth, family income, maternal employment, and race to measure the effects of family background on student achievement.

[46] G.J. Duncan & J. Brooks-Gunn, (Eds). *Consequences of Growing Up Poor*. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1997). D. J. Stipek & R. H. Ryan, "Economically disadvantaged preschoolers: Ready to learn but further to go," *Developmental Psychology*, **32**, (1997) 492-504. See also R. Rothstein, op. cit.

local environment, higher SES families reside in more socially organized neighborhoods, and they are less likely to move residence such that their children must change school. This pathway is the most important, and yet the one most neglected in current policies and school practices.

Second, higher SES families use out-of-school time (including summer-time) in a more educative way: they are more likely to use pre-schooling and day-care centers for their children, and they spend more time on reading (Table 2). These differences are evident in the widening of educational performance over the summer period: lower SES students have been found to fall further behind during the summer months.[47]

Third, high SES parents are more involved in their children's schooling (Table 3). They are more likely to have exercised a direct preference for a particular type of school, and more likely to be involved in school-based activities. As well, higher SES parents are more likely to monitor the performance of their children's schooling more intensively and more effectively. Finally, higher SES parents are more likely to assist their children in their homework. It is this pathway that has received the most attention in terms of policy reform (and has been promoted by school choice advocates); and yet it is a relatively weak pathway to educational advancement.

Collectively, these three pathways suggest a substantial educational advantage for children of higher SES parents. We also note that these pathways refer to specific *educational* advantages that parents pass to their children, and we have not addressed more general economic, social, and behavioral advantages that may accrue. Therefore, these pathways allow us to identify specific practices and behaviors that parents can employ to improve educational outcomes that can then be introduced into the metaphorical contract. In fact, it is possible to be more precise, identifying actual tasks that parents may engage in. For example, in relation to effective parental involvement with homework, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001) identify how high SES parents: interact with the student's school or teacher about homework; provide general oversight of the homework process; respond to the student's homework performance; engage in homework processes and

[47] K. L. Alexander, D. R. Entwisle, & L. S. Olson, "Schools, Achievement, and Inequality: A Seasonal Perspective" Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, **23**(2) (Summer 2001), pp. 171-191.

tasks with the student; and engage in meta-strategies to create a fit between the task and student skill levels.[48] Each of these tasks may enhance educational performance. Nonetheless, the information in Tables 1-3 is intended to be illustrative of what might be included in a parent-school contract. We want to point out that some of these behaviors are only possible with higher family income. However, others require a substitution of a more effective set of behaviors for ones that are less effective.

Of course, some schools have established contracts with parents. But, these are very brief and tend to focus on highly specific and functional contractual terms (e.g. the time the student should arrive at school, and the number of hours the student should spend in school, student comportment, and parent volunteer requirements).[49] They are certainly highly incomplete specifications of behaviors that parents might exhibit to maximize the educational performance of their children. Parental contracts can be enforced if the school has the power to select its students as in many public schools of choice, charter schools, and independent schools. However, we are unaware of any enforceable contracts that reflect the activities listed in Tables 1-3.

IMPLEMENTING THE CONTRACT

Of course just to take what we know about the potential of the family for contributing to educational success and encapsulating that into a contract does not change very much. The real challenge is to alter family and school practices by implementing the provisions of the contract. This seems daunting because of the inability of the state to monitor and enforce family behavior, particularly given the subtleties of behavior

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[48] Hoover-Dempsey KV, Battiato AC, Walker JMT, Reed RP, DeJong JM, Jones KP. (2001). Parental involvement in homework. *Educational Psychologist*, **36**, 195-209.

[49] The parent/guardian 'Achievement Agreement' at Bronx Preparatory Charter School lists eight commitments, of which only one refers to a parental role outside the school. This commitment expects the parents to: allow the child to contact the teachers about attendance and homework; read at night; attend parent/teacher conferences; make themselves available to staff; read all papers sent home; schedule student absence during the afternoons; and purchasing necessary materials. Similarly, the pledge by parents at North Star Academy Charter School of Newark has ten items, of which only one refers to the type of activities identified in Tables 1-3: "we will check our child's homework each night and provide quiet time and space for the work to be completed." A third example, Hyde School, makes no reference to family behaviors beyond attendance at a school retreat. At the Accelerated School, Los Angeles, the agreement expects the parent to provide home-academic support (e.g. ensuring the child is ready to learn), provide school support, and participate in at least 3 hours of school-based activity. Other countries have developed policies on home-school agreements. In England, the School Standards and Framework Act of 1998 expects each school to adopt an agreement relating to: the standard of education; the ethos of the school; regular and punctual attendance; discipline and behavior; homework; and the information schools and parents should give to each other. Again, the actual content of the agreement is loosely specified. Similarly, school handbooks specify rules that apply within the school.

on child development. Yet, the license provided by a metaphorical contract permits us to conceptualize the purposes that such a contract might serve, even in the absence of strict enforcement.

Incentives

Potential motivation for attempting to comport with the terms of the contract is certainly in the domain of self-interest for families. That is, we believe that families have a deep interest in the success of their children in both school and in life. If families can be convinced that feasible actions that they might take will improve their children's chances, they will be motivated to undertake them within the their abilities and resources. We believe that this incentive is a very powerful one. But, we also believe that there are constraints upon families in fulfilling such contracts, a matter that is addressed below. At the same time, schools with pressures to improve student achievement – particularly among minorities and low-income students – also have incentives to mobilize family resources in behalf of better school performance. So does the larger society that will benefit from better civic behavior, economic performance, and political decisions of those whose education has improved.[50]

The information on good practices to improve the educational prospects of children is not common or widespread in a form that spells out specific actions that families can take. It is costly to obtain such information. Moreover, families are "socialized" by their experiences and circumstances to behave in certain ways and not in others. These differences are particularly poignant in Shirley Brice Heath's work on Ways With Words in which she compares parental language interactions with children among families of different SES and racial backgrounds.[51] They are also found in the important work of Melvyn Kohn, where families are shown to prepare their children for occupational success by transmitting the values and behaviors of their own occupations.[52] Thus, a working class adult will often emphasize conformity, obedience, following rules, and reluctance to challenge authority or seek alternatives. Children of professional parents are taught to challenge authority, negotiate, and consider options. Each is preparing offspring for success as the parent

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[50] R. H. Haveman & B. L. Wolfe, "The Role of Nonmarket Effects," Journal of Human Resources, **XIX**(3) (Summer 1984), pp. 377-407.
[51] S. B. Heath, Ways With Words (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Also see D. Taylor, Family Literacy (Woburn, MA: Heineman, 1999).
[52] M. L. Kohn, Class and Conformity: A Study in Values (Dorsey, IL: Homewood, 1969).

understands its requirements from their own occupational experiences, but the consequence is transmission of class status from generation-to-generation. We can call this a knowledge constraint, but it may also entail a capacity constraint. These differences in child language and orientation also result in different expectations and treatments of children in school, an example of the interaction between parental and school effects.[53]

By capacity constraint we mean that some families, even if informed of practices that will improve educational outcomes for their children, may not have the capacity to act on that knowledge. Clearly, transmitted language styles are not just determined by knowledge acquisition by parents about which approaches are more effective at socializing children for school experiences. Language is deeply embedded in culture and personality and does not simply shift through parents being informed that another style will be more advantageous for children's success.[54] In other cases families do not have the income to provide expanded opportunities for their children such as enriched childcare, effective preschools, health care, nutrition, and housing. Nevertheless, there is scope for parents to be made more aware of effective practices in these domains, for such knowledge is a necessary condition for change.

Implementation Strategies

We believe that a metaphorical contract for parents could be divided into three parts, each dedicated to a different type of strategy[55]: (1) information; (2) assistance; and (3) externally provided activities.

(1) Information – A metaphorical contract for parents to enhance the education of their children would be a repository of information, much of it presently unfamiliar to families on what types of activities are effective. Simply knowing what is exemplary serves an important function as parents make decisions about their offspring. Many of the activities are feasible for almost any family such as setting aside reading time for children, rewarding good school performance, discussing school experiences, reviewing a child's schoolwork, meeting with teachers for progress reports, taking

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[53] M. Carnoy & H. M. Levin, Schooling and Work in the Democratic State (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985), pp. 110-143.

[54] The classic work on this topic is that of P. Bourdieu & J-C Passeron, Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture (London: Sage Publications, 1977). Also, see the linguistic foundations in B. Bernstein, Class, Codes, and Control (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).

[55] As we note, much of the contract will require direct support for families in the form that will encourage greater eductional effectiveness of family behavior. This will not only entail school-based strategies, but major commitments to

children to the library on a regular basis, guiding television viewing, and so on. We believe that there are many activities that parents would be willing to undertake both at home and in conjunction with schools if they knew that these were activities that would have a positive effect on their child's education.

(2) Assisted Activities – The metaphorical contract would contain other responsibilities that parents cannot do alone because of a lack of resources or other capacity constraints. For example, students may need help on homework that parents are unable to provide. In this case, school or community-provided homework assistance or tutoring will be necessary, even though it will be up to parents to monitor their children's needs and to make appropriate arrangements. Other areas that may require assistance are training in parenting skills; orienting children towards college and learning the academic requirements; visiting colleges; and using community services such as those provided by public agencies and non-profit providers as well as religious organizations. All of these represent an intermediate range of activities where parents can take responsibility if they have assistance.

(3) External Support – These are activities in which parents may require substantial assistance to be able to fulfill the contract. At one extreme are such basic necessities for human and educational development as decent housing in safe neighborhoods, health care, employment opportunities, and adequate income to provide amenities.[56] In addition, they may include quality pre-schooling, summer schools, tutoring centers, and after-school programs and the provision of summer jobs for students and test preparation courses including those for college entrance examinations. External support may entail longer school years and school days for children to accommodate educational enrichment. Both assisted and externally-supported activities will likely entail a variety of providers including

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families as well. For examples of general programs of family support, see S. L. Kagan & B. Weissbourd, eds., Putting Families First: America's Family Support Movement and the Challenge of Change (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass).

[56] For concrete evidence on the effects of housing on student achievement, see J. Ludwig, H. F. Ladd & G. J. Duncan. "The Effects of Urban Poverty on Educational Outcomes: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment" In W.G. Gale & J. Rothenberg Pack, Brookings Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs (Brookings: Washington, DC: Brookings, 2001). The impact of increased family income for poor families on educational achievement is found in E. Dearing, K. McCartney, & B. A. Taylor. "Change in family income-to-needs matters more for children with less." Child Development, **72**, 6. (2001) 1779-1793.

schools, other governmental organizations, philanthropic groups, community organizations, and faith-based organizations.

Next Steps

The next steps in moving in these directions would be to do a fully comprehensive survey of the knowledge-base that relates family activities to educational success of offspring. We have attempted only a sampling of that knowledge-base, but a much fuller survey and synthesis is called for. This comprehensive knowledge-base would need to be transformed into a metaphorical contract that would set out categories and specific types of activities that families would commit themselves to on behalf of their children. The contract would also be accompanied by the "rewards" in terms of predicted educational progress associated with these types of activities.

Activities would need to be divided according to those whose performance would require one of the three intervention strategies: information, assistance, and external provision. Each of the three strategic areas would require design and implementation of programs that would be effective in assisting parents to honor substantial parts of the contract. Social policy would weigh efforts to provide support for families to fulfill their obligations relative to similar support for schools to fulfill theirs. School activities and parent involvement programs could also be refined to support parent partnership contracts. Increasingly, economists are suggesting that reforms to support family's educational activities will provide a considerably larger improvement in the education of at-risk populations than direct investments in schools.[57]

Clearly, this exploration of metaphorical contracts for families has raised as many questions as suggestive directions to pursue. In addition to further details on the knowledge base and how it might suggest different implementation strategies, there are at least two larger issues for using the contract. As we construct the metaphorical contract and its different parts, it is not clear who are the potential parties to the agreement beyond families. Obviously, schools become a potential partner when the child reaches school age, but probably not during the pre-school years. Schools have incentives to provide assistance to families in exchange for better student performance on which schools are judged. The larger impact of educational

[57] See Rothstein, op. cit. and Hoxby, op. cit.

attainments on labor force productivity, citizenship, and social participation mean that society and its governmental and non-governmental organizations also have a stake in the contract.[58] But, how these particular groups will participate in the contract and how this will be coordinated is certainly not clear.

Second, there is the question of whether there are any grounds for enforcement of any part of the contract. Enforcement requires both monitoring and sanctions. Monitoring of family behavior – particularly the more subtle components - is not likely to be appropriate or feasible; and sanctions for most family behaviors are unlikely to be available. Thus, we suspect that there must be greater reliance upon incentives, not only the rewards of better child performance, but incentives for such results as good grades, student achievement, attendance, and school completion. For example, income maintenance payments can be made conditional on these types of outcomes. It is these types of questions that need to be more fully addressed in order to make significant progress on metaphorical contracts for family education partnerships.

[58] A forward-looking proposal by business interests for universal pre-schools to raise educational results (and improve the future labor force) is Committee for Economic Development, Preschool for All: Investing in a Productive and Just Society (New York: CED, 2002). The citizenship and social participation rationales are found in A. Gutmann, Democratic Education (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

Table 1 Home Environment Pathways Between SES and Student Achievement

Home Environment Variables:	Impact on children of being in a low SES family
Learning environment	Lower likelihood of a 'school-like' home [1]
Language and literacy	Weaker language interaction with parents (less talking; fewer object labels; shorter, non-contingent conservations; more controlling speech) [2] Weaker literacy engagement (value placed on literacy; press for achievement; availability and instrumental use of reading materials; reading with children; and opportunities for verbal interaction) [3]
Parent – child interactions	Conflicting interactions with parents; more controlling, restrictive and disapproving parents [4]
Daily routine	Less likely to follow a daily routine [5]
Health and nutrition	Lower health; less health care (e.g. immunization delay; more conditions limiting school activity) [6]
Parents' mental health	Have parents with greater risk of depression [7]
Choice of neighborhood	Residence in more socially disorganized neighborhoods, with fewer child development resources and greater exposure to violence [8] Higher school mobility from residence mobility [9]

Sources: [1] J. L. Epstein. School, Family and Community Partnerships. (Westview Press, Boulder, 2001). R. H. Bradley. "Home environment and parenting." In M. Bornstein. Handbook of parenting. (Hillsdale, NH: Erlbaum, 1995). [2] A. Lareau. Contours of childhood: Social class differences in children's daily lives. (Working Paper No. 19, Center for Working Families. Berkeley, CA: Center for Working Families, 2000). [3] R. D. Hess, & S. Holloway. "Family and school as educational institutions." In R. D. Parke (Ed.). Review of Child Development Research, 7: The family (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). [4] F. R. Liaw, & J. Brooks-Gunn. "Cumulative familial risks and low birth weight children's cognitive and behavioral development." Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, **23**, 4, (1995) 360-372. [5] P. Rebello Britto, A. S. Fuligni & J. Brooks-Gunn. "Reading, rhymes, and routines: American parents and their young children." In N. Halfron, M. Schuster, & K. McLean (Eds.), The health and social condition of young children and their families. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). [6] J. Brooks-Gunn & G. J. Duncan, G. J. "The effects of poverty on children." The Future of Children, 7, 2, (1997) 55-71. [5] P.W. Newacheck, J. J. Stoddard, & M. McManus. "Ethnocultural variations in the prevalence and impact of childhood chronic conditions." Pediatrics, 91, (1993) 1031-1038. [7] N. E. Adler, T. Boyce, & M.A. Chesney. "Socioeconomic inequalities in health: No easy solution." Journal of the American Medical Association, **269**, (1993) 3140-3145. [8] T. Leventhal & J. Brooks-Gunn. "The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence on child and adolescent outcomes." Psychological Bulletin, **126**, 2, (2000) 309-337. R.J. Sampson, S. W. Raudenbush & F. Earls. "Neighborhood and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy." Science, 277, (1997) 918-924. [9] General Accounting Office. "Elementary school children: Many change schools frequently, harming their education." (Washington, DC: GAO/HEHS 94-45, 1994).

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Table 2 Out-of-School Pathways Between SES and Student Achievement

Out-of-School Time Variables:	Impact on children of being in a low SES family
Child care	Lower quality child care [1] Choice of child care based on cost, location rather than quality [2] Care by relatives rather than center care or nannies [3]
Pre-school	Less likely to attend pre-school [4]
After-school and summer-time	Spend more time in informal play, outside play, or television watching [5] Spend less time on sports and reading [6]

Sources. [1] E. Gallinsky, C. Howes, S. Kontos & M. Shinn. The study of children in family child care and relative care. (New York: Families and Work Institute, 1994). [2] V. Peyton, A. Jacobs, M. O'Brien, and C. Roy. "Reasons for choosing child care: Associations with family factors, quality, and satisfaction." Early Childhood Research Quarterly, **16**, (2001) 191-208. [3] J. Ehrle, G. Adams, & T. Tout. Who's caring for our youngest children: Child Care patterns of infants and toddlers. (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2001). [4] General Accounting Office. Elementary school children: Many change schools frequently, harming their education. (GAO/HEHS 94-45, 1994). [5] A. Lareau. Contours of childhood: Social class differences in children's daily lives. (Working Paper No. 19, Center for Working Families. Berkeley, CA: Center for Working Families, 2000). J. K. Posner & D. L. Vandell. "After school activities and the development of low-income urban children: A longitudinal study," Developmental Psychology, 35,3, (1999) 868-879. [6] S. M. McHale, A. C. Crouter & C. J. Tucker. "Free-time activities in middle childhood: Links with adjustment in early adolescence," Child Development, 72, 6, (2001) 1764-1778.

Table 3 Parental Involvement with Schooling Pathways Between SES and Student Achievement

Parental Involvement with Schooling:	Impact on children of being in a low SES family
Choice of school	Less likely to have chosen a private school [1] Less likely to have had home location chosen in conjunction with schooling decision [1] Less likely to have taken advantage of public choice programs [2]
Communication with school and requests made	Less involved in school-based practices [3]
School involvement	Less involved in evaluation of school provision (less monitoring of child's schooling; intervention in children's program; less critical of teachers; less supplementary materials to reinforce classroom experience) [4]
Homework help	Less homework help in terms of valuing, monitoring, assisting, not interfering and doing [5]

Sources: [1] S. Woodhouse. Parental strategies for increasing child well-being: The case of elementary school choice. (Berkeley, CA: Center for Working Families, 1999). Hoxby, op. cit. [2] J. F. Witte. The Market Approach to Education (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). [3] Epstein, J. L. "Parents' reactions to teacher practices of parent involvement," The Elementary School Journal **86**, (1996) 277-294. [4] A. Lareau. "Home advantage," (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1989). [5] Scott-Jones. "Parent-child interaction and school achievement," In Ryan et al. (ed.) The Family-school connection: theory, research, and practice ( ).

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